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北京青年报
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY

3 decades of change in China's capital

The stories of 14 expats who have made their homes in Beijing

In the last 30 years, the opened China has become home to more and more foreign residents. They breathe the same air, eat the same food and experience history with the locals.

Beijing Today talks to the most influential expats in the fields of commerce, media, transportation, environmental protection, sports, cultural communication and the arts.

"We were avoided like a SARS patient ... Now, getting timely information is becoming relatively easier."

Jaime FlorCruz, CNN's Beijing bureau chief
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"I also find that more and more Chinese companies are becoming interested in green issues."

Dermot O'Gorman, WWF China representative
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"We should give more people an opportunity to understand and enjoy soccer for its own sake, not just to become a superstar or to win the World Cup."

Rowan Simons, Chairman of Club Football
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"Lots of misunderstanding is because of the culture reason. Behind a business opportunity is the culture issue."

Sir Barry Jowett, founder of Confucius Academy
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"At the beginning, contemporary Chinese art was strongly influenced by the West, but gradually, it grew into something much more vernacular."

Uli Sigg, art collector
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Dominic Johnson-Hill, 35, a Briton who calls himself a "creative dictator," arrived in Beijing 16 years ago. With an investment of tens of thousands of yuan, he created the city's first T-shirt brand, now a must-buy gift for foreign tourists.

China has attracted the world attention during the past three decades, with more and more foreigners opting to settle in the country and making money from their creative work.

Beijing Today visited three expats living and working in China, talking about their business and lives.

Dominic Johnson-Hill

The expat who created the capital's T-shirts

By Huang Daohen

Johnson-Hill was named last November "Entrepreneur of the year" for his achievements in his T-shirt business.

A three-yuan subway ticket, Yanjing beer sticker, *laowai*-favored "Gongbaojiding" and even the illegal street stickers used to resell old drugs, Johnson-Hill has plastered the city's daily symbols on the T-shirts to create Plastered.

Plastering the city on shirts

"I'm so proud to say I have created a T-shirt brand for the city," Johnson-Hill said, "I just wanted to express the feeling of a foreigner's experience and what he has seen in Beijing."

Johnson-Hill's store is in Nanluoguxiang, Dongcheng District, a reconstructed *hutong* and a favorite haunt of the city's expats. Heading down the lane to the north, one may find the shop marked by a blue and white sign featuring a large number "8."

"This design is the inspiration behind the Plastered T-Shirts logo," Johnson-Hill said, "The blue part has the address written on it and the white part features the number of the building." He said the reason he chose eight is because it is a lucky number.

Johnson-Hill bought his little kingdom from a local resident three years ago. In a room about 10 square meters large there are exciting T-shirts for men, women and children that explore the diversity and latent beauty of everyday city life.

"Every design incorporates potent graphics that are prevalent across the capital," he said. There are the illegal street stickers for reselling old drugs, labels from bottles of Erguotou, the "An Quan" (safety in Chinese) logo featured on kids' yellow caps and the old-fashioned subway tickets.

Johnson-Hill said such images, though taken for granted, were as iconic as the Temple of Heaven or Tiananmen and should be celebrated.

He said cities like London and New York all have their own T-shirts themed as an urban brand, "However, I did not find one in Beijing." He took the opportunity to set up Plastered three years ago after working as a teacher, translator and market researcher.

In love with hutong

Johnson-Hill left his native England as a teen to explore the world before making Beijing his home. He said he fell in love with the city's traditional lanes at first sight when he first arrived in the city.

At age 17, Johnson-Hill started traveling the world from South Africa to Colombia and then to India, leaving his footprints everywhere. "I have been to many countries, but I chose to stay in Beijing because I felt I have a special affinity for it. Once I saw the hutong,

"I always believed that Plastered T-shirts could achieve brand status in China and that's why I put all my time and passion into our brand."



Dominic Johnson-Hill says the Olympics Games helps boost business at his T-shirt shop.

Photo provided by Johnson-Hill

and heard Beijingers chatting, I was not able to leave," he said.

Even while most locals opt for car-friendly streets and high rises, Johnson-Hill's love affair with the hutong continues.

Nanluoguxiang Hutong was chosen as one of two official Olympics lanes. A huge investment went into redeveloping and beautifying the lanes in time for the Olympics. "I was on the committee for the development of the lanes for the Olympics," he said. "Some one million yuan was given to beautify this area, this lane and the lanes off it. It looks quite nice."

Johnson-Hill now speaks fluent Chinese and can converse with the residents of his courtyard in Nanluoguxiang.

Entrepreneur of 2008

Last November, Johnson-Hill was named Entrepreneur of the year 2008 for his achievements in his T-shirt business. The award, given by the British Council in China, recognizes British entrepreneurs and enterprises in China.

Johnson-Hill said he was "surprised" when he heard he won. "I never thought about winning an award. It's not really something that crosses your mind when building a business and working hard at it everyday," he said.

"We were up against some of the best entrepreneurs in the world. We were just so honored to be on the shortlist. When they read out 'plastered T-shirts,' the emotion was incredible," he said.

"We started our business very small and with only a tiny investment and have grown significantly over the last three years through pushing a creative idea," Johnson-Hill said.

"I always believed that Plastered T-shirts could achieve brand status in China and that's why I put all my time and passion into our brand," he said.

Future plans

Though the creative reflection of the city on a T-shirt is well accepted by the public and the business is doing well, Johnson-Hill said the store suffered in its first month when less than two dozen T-shirts were sold.

Later, foreign customers brought hope. "They are particularly fond of it, and regard it as a special gift from the city," he said.

"Now, we are struggling to keep up with demand. At first, 95 percent of our customers were non-Chinese. Now we have retained those customers, but the ratio has been diluted by the number of Chinese (buyers)," he added.

Johnson-Hill has a plan to open branch in the 798 Art District and hopes more outlets will be launched in the city.

For the future, Johnson-Hill said they would carry on. "Thanks to the Olympics, we had a lot of exposure overseas, but nothing will drastically change," he said.

Rupert Hoogewerf

On the trail of the super rich



Rupert Hoogewerf, born in 1970 in Luxembourg, Britain, publishes the *Hurun Report*, a monthly magazine best-known for its *China Rich List*, a ranking of the wealthiest individuals in the country.

The list has brought the country's low-profile wealthy into the limelight and in doing so brought its founder tremendous fame and profit.

While the per capita income in China hovers at barely US \$1,500 (10280 yuan), people are already talking about who is the richest. Regardless of the media obsession, one Briton has benefited enormously from the national fascination with the super-rich.

By Huang Daohen

Rupert Hoogewerf, better known by his Chinese name Hurun, first came to study Chinese from 1990 to 1991 as an exchange student from Britain's Durham University. Because of his expertise in Chinese, he was transferred to Arthur Anderson's Shanghai Office in 1997.

In 1999, Hoogewerf joined hands with *Forbes*, the US magazine famous for its annual rich persons list, to launch the first list of China's top 50 richest people. At that time, most people had only begun to dream of personal wealth. A few decades ago, possessing massive wealth was considered shameful.

However, the ranking stirred the population and for a decade Hurun's name has been mentioned as the cataloger of billionaires.

Looking back, Hoogewerf said he was lucky with his experience in China. However, he would have never succeeded without perseverance. "Not all of them [Chinese tycoons] want to be found," he said.

Over the past years, Hoogewerf and his research team sometimes pay personal visits to candidates to ensure the amount of their wealth, which is calculated based on public records.

"Most of the people I have contacted take a do-not-care attitude. If the company is solid, then you are not frightened to be either on or off the list," Hoogewerf said.

While most candidates take a casual attitude, some have gone to extremes. Sometimes, there are people who do not want to be listed. "Chinese culture has a saying that you should not be the tallest tree," he said.

What Hoogewerf did not expect was that the exposure of the super-rich would help tip off the government to some businessmen's ill-gotten assets.

Over a dozen Chinese tycoons listed by Hoogewerf have found themselves mired in court trouble, the latest of whom is Gome's former president Huang Guangyu.

"Only a very small fraction of people have problems, and I think most of the people on the list do have clean money," Hoogewerf said.

When asked about how many more years he is going to work on the Chinese rich persons list, "That's the future. I am not sure," said Hoogewerf, who bought an apartment in Shanghai and moved his family to the city.

Darren Moore

Building a kingdom of natural soap in a hutong



Moore used to make soap in his kitchen.

Photo provided by Darren Moore

By Wang Yu

Darren Moore moved to his courtyard to start a luxury soap business four years ago. The Canadian soapmaker used to work as a marketing director for Bell, Canada's largest telecom, but in 1996 a company project brought him to Yantai, Shandong Province. His company is one of the top three handmade soap manufacturers in the world, and the story began with his own skin problem.

Moore moved to Beijing with his wife Zhangping, but soon developed a serious skin irritation in the winter. "I have the driest skin on the planet. When I was a kid, they called me the snake because of how it peeled," he said.

He learned about harmful chemicals present in commercial soaps while researching treatments on the Internet. He stopped using commercial soaps and began to make his own using virgin olive oil mixed with alkalis. His problems went away, and in their place came a new business opportunity.

Unlike big brands, Moore uses a production method called "cold crafting," which applies no additional heat during the manufacturing process. "That's how people made soaps hundreds of years ago," Moore said.

Most of the soaps produced in his factory are exported to the US and England. "Our export-focused private label business model is actually quite unique. While most manufacturers focus on promoting a production capability or service, we focus on trying to help our clients build and extend their brands," Moore said.

Normally, for a client to create and launch a new cosmetic line would take many months and tens of thousands of dollars in investment. By using Moore's private label service allows any client to create and launch its own brand in as little as 10 days. Costs can be as low as a few hundred dollars.

"Every year we spend a great deal of



Darren Moore, Canadian soap maker. Moore learnt the soap making all by himself. His company in China is now one of the top three handmade luxury soap manufacturers in the world.

Photo by Wang Yu

time researching the latest ingredients and product trends which we then use to create a wide variety of in-stock, luxury quality, natural product lines. Prospective clients can then browse our catalog and simply select the products they want, the size and packaging style desired and send us their logo. We'll then create a label design for them and finish the order," Moore said.

In the domestic market, Moore has an online store on Taobao.com. "We are currently negotiating to open retail stores in several major Beijing malls. We hope to have our first store open in March or April this year, and open five more by year end," he said.

Ingredient quality is critical to the product's success, but sourcing locally produced raw materials remains a challenge.

"Many of the ingredients we see in the local markets are adulterated with chemicals and other unhealthy additives. As a result we still import 98 percent of our ingredients from known producers in countries such as Brazil, Malaysia, Ghana, France, Italy, India and the US. The costs are much higher, but you simply

cannot make quality products from inferior ingredients," Moore said.

The business culture in China still tends to focus on the now rather than the tomorrow. "This leads to hasty or poor execution of business ideas and plans resulting in less than optimal results," Moore said.

But things are changing. "It's the result of two key events. First, the return of overseas-educated Chinese with new ideas and enthusiasm. Second, the rise of the Internet, which has both opened up a whole new window of knowledge and empowered a new generation of entrepreneurs," he said.

Domestic demand for natural cosmetics has grown dramatically over the past two years. Moore launched his own natural cosmetic brand Organic Earth to seize on the opportunity.

"The business culture of tomorrow will probably move more towards the Hong Kong model yet evolve into its own new species – a sort of east meets east-west hybrid. A Made in China solution to a Made in China opportunity," Moore said.



CNN's Beijing bureau chief Jaime FlorCruz's experiences in China stun most people who hear them for the first time. His first trip to China in 1971, scheduled for three weeks, became a 37-year post. While he was away from home, Philippines President Marcos declared martial law in his own country and jailed critics, leaving him exiled in Beijing.

Photo provided by Jaime FlorCruz's

By Annie Wei

Goldkorn is from South Africa and came to China in 1995. His major while in university was literature.

Early in 1997, he was the executive editor of the first free English listing magazine *Beijing Scene*. He also participated in the establishment of *Er*, helped establish *That's Beijing*, renamed *the Beijinger* since 2001.

During the SARS epidemic, he found a new interest in Web site and blogs.

"I found that no English publications or media wrote about (this development)," he said, "Many foreign media write things for an audience who knows nothing about China. What they write is very superficial, and I found their work has nothing to do with the China in which I live. Although their journalists stay and write in China, their editors don't."

Today, there are many English blogs and Web sites covering China. *Beijing Today* interviewed Jeremy Goldkorn to learn about the situation of new media in the country.

BJToday: Big media companies are hoping to find new opportunity in the coming 3G multimedia. Do you think

In China, media is known as the voicebox of the Party for its incredible influence and power. Media continues to be the window through which the world can see the real China.

Jaime FlorCruz's Covering China for 30 years

By Annie Wei

During his interview with Danwei.org, FlorCruz said he worked on a state farm in Hengyang, Hunan Province from 1972 to 1974, then apprenticed on trawler boats to catch fish and prawns in the Bohai Bay, the innermost gulf of the Yellow Sea on the coast of northeastern China.

He attended Beijing Language and Culture University from 1974 to 1976 and then Beijing University from 1977 to 1982. He taught English part-time and sang English songs on CCTV. He was also a member of Beijing University's basketball team. Later on, he worked as a journalist for *Newsweek* in the early '80s, and then wrote for *Time* before joining CNN.

Beijing Today asked FlorCruz about changes in China's traditional media and the emergence of new media.

BJToday: How has the media industry in China changed from 1982 till now: for foreign news agencies, newspaper bureaus and Chinese newspaper and television?

JFC: When I was first starting as an international journalist in the early 1980s, there were only scores of us covering China for about 20 overseas news organizations. By January 2008, the total reached 818 journalists from 378 media organizations. In the 1980s, it was quite frustrating to work as a foreign journalist because we frequently encountered bureaucratic foot-dragging and logistical problems. Whenever we requested interviews, it was often "bu xing" (no way) or "bu fangbian" (not convenient).

After all, only three decades ago the weather forecast was considered a state secret. For ordinary Chinese, it was an

extraordinary decision whether or not they should talk to foreign journalists. We were avoided like a SARS patient. Thirty years ago, reporters were permitted nothing more than carefully guided visits and stilted interviews. Now, getting timely information is becoming relatively easier.

In the early 1980s, Chinese media was tightly controlled and were mostly state-owned or state-administered. There were few choices for readers and viewers. Even though there were a dozen newspapers, they mostly ran the same stories. They were steeped in politics and ideology.

Now, there are countless newspapers and magazines, radio, TV and cable stations and there is New Media—all competing for their customers' eyeballs and money. There are still restrictions, but they have loosened much since the 1980s.

BJToday: What you think of new media, like blogs and forums in China, as news sources for foreign reporters or for people to spread interesting stories though they lack the power and commercial benefit of traditional media?

JFC: New Media, including the search engines, blogs and the BBSes, are all important sources of information and opinion for those who cover China. We watch them closely. They give us a glimpse into what the Chinese population is thinking or talking about. They reflect an important and powerful part of public opinion.

Sometimes, they give us leads on important themes or interesting stories. In this sense, they complement China's mainstream media. Of course, we take every means possible to double-check what is in the blogs to ensure their accuracy and fairness.

Jeremy Goldkorn Blogging the trend

there are still chances for individual bloggers?

JG: Blogging software and Web sites, and every new Web site and Internet development such as YouTube, Tudou, Youku and Twitter, have given ordinary people more and more opportunities to make their voices heard. If you have something to say, there will always be an opportunity.

BJToday: It seems more foreigners who are good at Chinese are blogging about China or translating Chinese articles online. Do you feel they compete with danwei.org, and what makes your blog stand out?

JG: There are now many Web sites and blogs which do an excellent job of covering Chinese media and news about China in English. This is a good thing: it means that there is more and more information about China available in English and that China is becoming a part of the global Internet conversation about the world.

Global conversation on the Internet happens largely in English: like it or not, no other language has the same reach and power. The fact that curious netizens from any part of the world now have so many great blogs and Web sites at which to learn about the real China is a good thing for China: its reputation in foreign countries is at its worst when foreigners do not know what is happening.

Contrast that with the situation in 2009, when foreigners have so many sources of information about China that they can find out

the truth if they have any curiosity at all, and a lot of the truth is really good. This is reflected in all the blogs and Web sites.

So I am very happy that there are so many new English language Web sites and blogs about China. Danwei will be fine despite the competition: we like doing what we do, so it's fine with us if other people do similar things.

BJToday: You are running an online marketing research company also named danwei. What service does the company provide?

JG: The people who blog on Danwei are some of the smartest people I know in Beijing. They are all bi-cultural, Internet-savvy information hounds who write well, so we have established a Beijing company that offers research services. We research and write analysis and reports about what people are saying on the Chinese Internet and in the Chinese media. Our clients are media companies, PR companies, investment companies and banks.

BJToday: Can you talk more about your work for Ringier online?

JG: Ringier is Switzerland's largest media company. In China they work with many local companies to produce magazines and other media. I am in charge of their Web sites: Beitaichufang.com, Xmbella.cn, CityWeekend.com.cn, HolidayFu.com and several other new digital products such as Internet games and mobile phone media.



Jeremy Goldkorn, founder of Danwei.org, is a celebrity in local media circles. His blog Danwei.org, which promptly translates topics from Chinese media that may be of interest to foreign readers, has been showing aspects of China ignored by the foreign press since 2003.

Photo provided by Jeremy Goldkorn

Mikko Rautio Remembering a bygone era

Mikko Rautio helped to set up Finnair's Beijing office 20 years ago. Thinking back to the China's past, he said he is amazed how much change the country has seen, not only its ways of travel, but also in its people's life.

By Zheng Lu

One look at Mikko Rautio, and there is no doubt he is a foreigner. But he speaks Chinese fluently, actually better than he does his mother language Finnish. It is sometimes hard to tell whether he is more Finnish or more Chinese. Rautio and his parents moved to China in 1956 when he was three, and he has lived here more than 30 years. His life experiences mirror the changes that China has gone through.

From child to teenager

Ten years before the Cultural Revolution began, Rautio's family moved from Finland to China for work. His father became a teacher at the Beijing Normal University, and his mother a translator at

China Pictorial magazine.

In his childhood, Rautio was a troublemaker; the school expelled him in his first year. "Teachers were mad at me because I often chatted with classmates and ate in class," Rautio said. It was common that the teachers asked his parents to control him. Even when he transferred to another school, his mischievous nature did not change.

Rautio said when he came to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his primary school last year, the old teachers still recognized him. "Because I was the most uncontrollable student they have ever seen!" he said.

Soon after he entered junior high school in 1966, the Cultural Revolution began. All

schools suspended classes, so Rautio dropped out without finishing the seventh grade.

That was where his formal education stopped. Revolution's policy dictated that "educated youth must work in the countryside and mountainous areas," so his classmates left the city. But as a foreigner, "no place wanted to accept me," Rautio said. With nowhere to go, he bummed around the city.

During that time, foreigners were still a rare sight. Rautio said he always wore a cap to hide his brown hair. Even so, people on the street would stare at him.

"At first the Chinese thought I was Russian during the honeymoon of Sino-Soviet relations," he said. Later people called him Albanian

when the relationship of China and Albania improved, "then I became an American since Nixon's visit," Rautio said.

Becoming famous back home

Before the cultural revolution ended, Rautio returned to Finland for compulsory military service. It was 1974, after US President Richard Nixon's visit to China, during which restrictions eased somewhat.

"I was a star when I returned to my country after a seven-day train journey," Rautio said. The Finnish people were curious about the 21-year-old who had spent most of his life in a far-away country in the East. Many newspapers and TV stations interviewed him – a man who traveled from China to do military service.

The Finns were also interested in the Chinese people's way of living. "They asked me whether Chinese youngsters go to bars just like they do," Rautio said. Those were difficult questions to answer, he said, because "there was nothing of the kind in China."

Setting up Finnair in Beijing

Rautio returned to China 13 years after he left. In the summer of 1987, Finnair set up its Beijing office with him as chief representative – a stroke of good luck in his career, Rautio said.

The airline was the first to offer a direct flight from Europe to China, which drastically reduced travel time from 16 to eight hours. Finnair at present has a 5 to 7 percent share of the China airline market, a considerable percentage for a mid-sized airline.

The airline's success owes much to Rautio's hard work. "I applied to register at the Industrial and Commercial Bureau, but people there said they would only approve the application once we already had an office space," Rautio said. "But the written guidelines said to apply first before getting an office space."

He eventually solved that problem, but other troubles followed. At that time, only the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) had the right to sell airline tickets. So when passengers transferred their booking to Finnair, "it was embarrassing to let guests stand in line (at CAAC) for their tickets," Rautio said. Instead, he often queued up at CAAC to get the tickets. Only in 1993 were international airlines given the right to sell their own tickets.

Their nonexistent cargo

business was another problem. "In the first few years, we did not receive any freight orders," Rautio said. Since CAAC was the cargo agent, Rautio turned to them. In accordance with Chinese practice, he "held them near," a euphemism for winning and dining officials.

Rautio said that changes have occurred since then because of the open market. "It is easier to contact government officials now," he said. Two decades ago, it was hard to get a hold of officials. And even when he managed to speak to them, "they barely gave us straight answers to many things."

How the airline business flourishes

Finnair has been in China for 20 years, but Rautio found that the biggest changes came at the beginning of its second decade. "The simplest example is that since 2000, more and more Chinese are traveling abroad," he said. In the airline's first 10 years, most of its clients were foreign companies and embassies. "Now I rarely meet foreigners," he said.

Rautio identifies the reasons for the expansion in China's airline industry. "First of all, Chinese people can get passports more easily," he said. Before 1995, only about 5 percent of their passengers were Chinese, and they were mainly business people. But the biggest reason is that "the Chinese have become wealthy and have changed their lifestyle," Rautio said. Chinese people freely go anywhere they want.

Government policy has also given international airlines more room to move. "The government does not protect Chinese airlines like they did before," Rautio said.

When he thinks of China's past, Rautio is amazed by how much change the country has been through. He still remembers that 20 years ago, Beijingers ate only cabbage in the winter, and that the downtowns would become pitch black at night because there was no nightlife. He also remembers shopping for his Chinese friends at the Friendship Store 30 years ago for things like Mao badge and cigarette, liquor and bicycle brands not sold to locals.

The past now seems so far away, but Rautio has been witness to China's ups and down. "I don't think I would have come back to work here if not for the country's opening," he said. He is now looking to see what surprises lie in the future.



Mikko Rautio is the chief representative in China of Finnair airlines. The company hired him in 1975 after living in China for 19 years. From 1995 to 2000, he was general manager in Singapore of Finnair, after which he returned to China as chief representative.

Photo by Zheng Lu

The World Wildlife Fund, one of the first NGOs to enter China 30 years ago, brought the concept of "environmental protection" to the country. It has led the country to a greener path, and now many other environmental NGOs have come and are deeply involved in local environmental work.

Dermot O'Gorman

China's path to greening



A WWF event tries to check which one is more environmentally-friendly, a regular bicycle or an energy-saving one.

By Han Manman

Thirty years ago, "environmental protection" was totally new to China. Now it has become one of the country's hottest issues.

At that time, no international environmental NGOs were allowed in. Now, many of them are here, and are deeply involved in local environmental work and sharing valuable information.

The World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) story probably best reflects China's journey into environmental awareness; the NGO was one of the first to enter the country and will celebrate 30 years here next year.

Raising awareness

Australian Dermot O'Gorman, 42, has been involved in environmental work since he was 12. After working in Australia, the UK, Switzerland, Fiji and Papua New Guinea as an environmental expert, he came here three years ago to assume the position of WWF China representative.

But that was not his first time to China. He came in 1994, when he encountered Chinese people who were zealous about greening up. He thought the country would be an interesting place to undertake environmental projects.

Rising environmental awareness reflects the central government's "green drive" at a time when the country faces a deteriorating natural environment caused by unsustainable economic development, O'Gorman said.

"The energy in China at present is fantastic. There is real enthusiasm to address environmental problems and to find practical solu-

tions," he said, adding that he sees many environment-related stories in the local media, which shows how important the issue has become among Chinese people.

"It is obvious that senior Chinese leaders have put a lot of effort and funding into addressing environmental issues. But I also find that more and more Chinese companies are becoming interested in green issues," O'Gorman said.

Olympic not the end of China's greening

According to a report released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) last year, China has made significant strides in instituting environmental improvements, including reducing air pollution, offsetting greenhouse gas emissions and boosting public transportation before the Olympics, especially in cities that hosted games.

Many international media, however, predicted the environmental situation would backslide after the Games as the government's greening efforts culminated in the Olympics.

O'Gorman did not agree with the analysis. "The Beijing Olympics helped usher in environmental awareness in the country. But this is a trend bigger than the Olympics as the Chinese government has realized the cost of environmental degradation."

O'Gorman said that 15 years ago, there were few environmental experts working in China. But in his three years here, he has been impressed with the expertise and level of professionalism he has seen.



O'Gorman (left) with kids in a WWF event. Photos provided by WWF

"China now has highly qualified people that are in the right places," he said, adding that the rest of the world in the coming decades will learn from China.

Working in an international NGO

In the 1980s, the Chinese government began introducing environmental laws and welcoming assistance from international NGOs. The International Crane Foundation (ICF) and WWF were two of the first international groups to come in to discuss the conservation of cranes and pandas, respectively.

Since the mid-1990s, the number of international environmental NGOs and philanthropic foundations conducting or funding environmental conservation campaigns has grown at an extraordinarily rapid pace. They have become watchdogs: they share ways to solve environmental problems, give training in rural areas to

raise people's awareness of environmental protection and empower rural communities to protect and manage their local resources.

"International NGOs entering China has been very helpful to the country, it's been very positive," O'Gorman said. "They provide an important role in the exchange of information and ideas; not only from around the world to China but also from China to the rest of the world. And China has begun to learn from Western countries to avoid making the same mistakes."

"My experience with the WWF is that China is very keen both to learn from other countries and also to share their successes with their neighbors," he said.

Water issue is severe

Even though China has seen positive changes in its environment, there are still many problems that need urgent attention.

O'Gorman said the biggest environmental problem is water, which

is also linked with other environmental issues.

"There are huge water shortages in some parts of China. There is a lot of pollution, which makes the water unfit for drinking or for use in agriculture," he said.

"The government knows this and has put a lot of effort into this. But it's a long-term problem that needs years to solve," O'Gorman said.

The green life

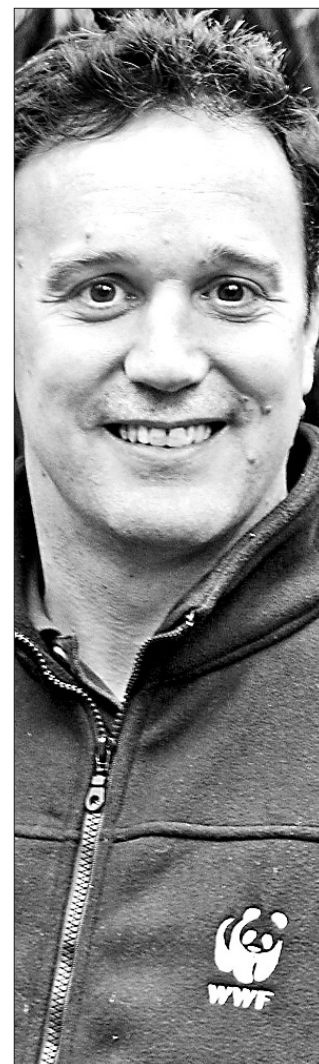
Many years of environmental work has given O'Gorman a "green life."

"I've been doing environmental work since I was 12 years old. I majored in environment, economics and business at university. And my first job after university was at a national park in Australia," O'Gorman said.

"Environmental work is greening society. It's more than just about trees or plants, it's about economics, politics and about how businesses can make positive contributions," he said.

O'Gorman has devised ways to reduce pollution in his every day life in China. He has four ways of going to the office: "Mostly, I come by bus, go home by subway and sometimes ride my bike." Another option is to use his hybrid car, run both by electricity and gasoline, which is more environmentally-friendly compared to most vehicles.

Being an environmentalist also won him a place as one of the Beijing Olympics' torchbearers. "That was a fascinating experience," he said. "My parents in Australia saw me on TV and felt very proud."



Australian Dermot O'Gorman, 42, has been involved in environmental work since he was 12. Three years ago he became WWF's China representative.



Three decades since the country began to reform and open, it has become a powerhouse in world sports. Rowan Simons, 41, a Briton who has lived in Beijing for over 20 years, has watched the rise and fall of the country's professional soccer league, and continues to pour his energy into developing a love for the sport in local communities. Through Rowan, Beijing Today gets an inside story into the obstacles that stand in the way of soccer's development in China. Last year, he published his book *Bamboo Goalpost*, which talks about his soccer experiences in the country.

Rowan Simons

The journey of amateur soccer in China

Rowan Simons came to Beijing in 1987 to study Chinese. In the same year, he started to work in CCTV to train news hosts in the English channel. In 1993, he started to work in BTV and created some TV programs, as well as appearing as a commentator on sports shows. In 2001, he founded his own amateur soccer club in Beijing. He now runs two media companies for cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries.



Simons at construction site of ClubFootball's first football field in Dongbeiwang Village.

By Jackie Zhang

Before Rowan Simons came to Beijing in the late 1980s, he knew nothing about Beijing and China. But after a few months of his arrival, he fell in love with the city and made up his mind to start his new life here.

First soccer games in Beijing

As an enthusiastic soccer fan from England, Simons committed himself to the development of amateur soccer in China.

"I gave up going back to England to complete my university degree," he said. Since then, he has been committed to developing amateur soccer in China. He founded China ClubFootball, the city's first joint venture soccer club.

His home country has many world-renowned professional soccer teams, along with thousands of amateur soccer clubs. Simons fell in love with the sport as a child. On his second day in Beijing, he formed a soccer team at the Beijing Foreign Studies University where he was enrolled. He named his team Dabizi, or "big nose," a facial feature of Westerners like himself.

"Our team had many people from different countries. Our goalkeeper was an American. The rear guards were Russian. There were also people from Germany, New Zealand, Poland, two Englishmen and one from North Korea. It was really an international students' team," he said.

Then television work entered his life, which pushed forward his soccer dreams. In 1993, he became a foreign expert at Beijing Television (BTV), the station's first ever. In the succeeding two years, he worked with BTV's sports department. He became a guest commentator on live English broadcasts of English Premier League games and England's Soccer Association Challenge Cup.

"From that time on, many people in Beijing recognized me on the street, saying he is the English guy talking about football on TV," Simons said. "I realized that Chinese people really like soccer. They are really interested in it because many people watch the program."

Simons believes soccer can be a bridge for people from different parts of the world. "It only has one set of rules. The rules are the same for anybody anywhere in the world," he said. "I think it's a wonderful way to build a relationships between China and other countries."

Cradle of amateur Chinese soccer

In 1997, Simons started thinking about doing something for amateur soccer in China after he witnessed the failure of the country's Jia A Soccer League, its first professional league. The reason for the failure was that the Chinese amateur soccer industry was so

weak. There were few Chinese people who played soccer just for fun," he said.

"A professional club must have hundreds of thousands of fans. The whole society must be involved," he said. "No



Simons with his soccer team in England in childhood

one could see the problem and no one did anything, so I decided to do things myself: We would build a club from the grassroots. My mission, my plan was to create the bottom of the soccer pyramid. Bring in lots of people who play it just for fun."



The Community Cup Soccer League in 2005

In 2001, he got a license from the Beijing Soccer Association to establish the city's first joint venture soccer club - China ClubFootball.

The first thing the club did was to build a soccer field in Dongbeiwang Vil-



Kids' soccer course in the club

Photo provided by DigiTouch

lage, in the northern suburbs of Beijing. Simons and his group turned a piece of unused land into a soccer field. But the move unfortunately failed.

"China is very different from Britain. Here, the air is very dry; winter is very cold, while summer is very hot. It was very hard to maintain the grass although we spent a lot of money on it," Simons said.

It was also difficult to find people to fill 11-person soccer teams for weekly matches. "After some time, we thought we had to throw away this model.

We changed it to five-a-side. And we changed from real grass surface to artificial grass, which was available 24 hours a day even in winter and on rainy days," Simons said.

The improvisations, made in 2004, paid off. The club now has over 100 teams.

At first, all its members were foreigners, people who brought a love for the sport from their home countries. "Slowly, Chinese players saw that our soccer league was consistent and was run professionally, so they started joining us. Now, we have more Chinese members than foreign members," Simons said.

The club has soccer matches every day for teams of different levels. "Some play really well and some only play for fun," Simons said. "So every type of team can find its rightful place. This is real good soccer."

The club's next plan was to build a soccer center. "It will be our very own center with eight fields, bathhouses, bars and offices. The center's construction will make the club's soccer training and league system complete. Our members can have their final competitions in the center, and our kids in children's courses can come here as well," he said. "This will be a center for amateur soccer in Beijing. Then, we plan to expand into other cities in China."

Where China stands on the soccer field

Simons sees that soccer in China still has a long journey to the top. "China does not have a soccer pyramid like other countries," he said. "At the bottom, you have millions of people who play just for fun. You have those who play on quite a good level, then a few who are very good. At the top are the national team and professional teams. But in China, there is nothing at the bottom." Simons said that England, for one, has 120,000 amateur soccer clubs with over 3 million members.

Simons is adamant that a soccer pyramid is the way to develop the sport in China. "We should give more people an opportunity to understand and enjoy soccer for its own sake, not just to become a superstar or to win the World Cup," he said. He criticized the Beijing Soccer Association and the Chinese Soccer Association for not knowing how to develop amateur soccer. "There is no department or office for amateur soccer in the associations. But in England, 60 percent of the soccer association's work is to help develop amateur soccer," he said.

There is no shortcut around promoting soccer among common people. "In 15 to 20 years, China will have a great national team if you do so. There is no other better method," he said.



Simons has been a soccer fan since childhood.

Photos provided by Rowan Simons

A melting pot of sight

1,2,3 Embassy areas

International organizations and the 165 embassies are assembled within the following three areas: Liangmahe, Ritan and Sanlitun.

4,5,6,7,8 Diplomatic apartments

There are six areas in the city where diplomatic apartments are located: Jianguomen Wai, Jindao, Liangmaqiao, Qijiyuan, Sanlitun and Tayuan.

9 Silk Street

Silk Street refers to a shopping center where tourists come for clothes, shoes, bags, accessories. It was originally an outdoor market located in Xiushui Dong Jie, southeast of Ritan. But after 20 years of business, in 2005, all the shops were relocated inside a new five-story building.

10 Yabaolu Market

Russian traders from Siberia first staked their claim on the market in the 1980s, and it has become a major landmark downtown. Most of the business signs are in Russian, written in the Cyrillic alphabet.

11 Houhai area

The lake-side area, home to restaurants, bars and cafes, has become a popular nightspot in recent years. Its boom began with the construction of Lotus Lane in 2003, which is lined with hip dining establishments. It draws foreign tourists, the city's expatriates and young locals.

12 Nanluoguxiang

East of Houhai Lake is Nanluoguxiang, an 800-meter-long alley filled with bars, cafes, restaurants and shops housed in Old Beijing hutong-like structures. The area received a facelift in early 2006 – the main road was paved with grey bricks; storefronts were renovated; and cafes and shops were opened. It has since evolved into a hangout for artists, hipsters and tourists.

13 Sanlitun

It is probably the best-known bar area in the capital, and remains a favorite among Beijing's expatriates, tourists and youngsters. Sanlitun's growth occurred alongside the country's economic reforms in the late-1970s and early-1980s when bars serving expats, and later locals, sprang up. International hotels housed the area's first bars, but in the 1990s, standalone establishments appeared. Before 2005, bars only ran from Sanlitun's northern street through a busy intersection with Gongti Bei Lu to its southern street.

14 Workers' Stadium

The areas north and east of the stadium, known as Gongti in Chinese, are popular nightlife destinations.

15 Maizidian, Yansha

With its high proportion of non-Chinese residents and foreign enterprises and organizations, Maizidian Street evolved into an international community beginning in the late-1980s.

16 798 Art District

The art district is the base of the city's thriving artistic community. It is in Dashanzi, a former military factory complex in Chaoyang District with 50-year-old buildings in Bauhaus architecture. 798 is often compared to New York's Greenwich Village or London's Soho, but is at risk of destruction from forces driving the city's commercialization.

17 Lido

The area around Lido Hotel is an entertainment base for both locals and foreigners.

18 Wangjing

The area has a large number of high-rise apartments dating from the mid-1990s. Because of its large number of South Korean residents – at least 70,000 – it has earned the nickname of Beijing's "Koreatown."

19 Wudaokou

Located in Haidian District, it became a commercial center in the 1950s following the establishment of universities there. The area is known for its large number of international students, especially those from South Korea. Its reputation as a student hangout is reflected in its large number of bars and nightclubs, which charge relatively cheaper prices.

20 Shunyi

Many foreign businesspeople who have relocated to Beijing with their families live in this area. It has many high-end residences, trendy shopping centers and international schools.

Beijing has become increasingly cosmopolitan. Over 200,000 visited every day, according to statistics. Shopping centers and entertainment venues reflect the influence.



ts, flavors and sounds

in the 30 years since China opened to the world. As of 2008, nearly 110,000 expatriates were living in the city and another from the Public Security Bureau's Division of Exit and Entry Administration. Many of the city's residential areas, shopping uences of its adopted citizens.



Chinese culture has been more and more popular in foreign countries. Confucian Academies have been opened in many cities in countries around the world by the Chinese government to promote the study of Chinese language and culture. Barry Jowett, a British man, has shouldered the responsibility of promoting Chinese culture to foreigners as well by establishing his own Confucius Academy in China.

Barry Jowett

Briton establishes academy for cross-cultural communication

By Han Manman

Sir Barry Jowett has been living in China for 15 years. Deeply involved in cross-cultural education, he decided to do his part to bridge the gap between East and West by opening a cross-cultural academy. The school has at its core the spirit of Confucianism – a philosophy that has influenced China for two millennia. Jowett's work has won him the title "cross-cultural envoy."

Cross-cultural envoy

In China, there has been a renewed interest in Kongzi, or Confucius, the moral philosopher who lived 2,500 years ago. Confucianism is a philosophy, not a religion, although there is a temple in Nanjing built to honor the philosopher. In early 2007, Jowett opened a Confucius Academy within the temple to promote the study of traditional culture by foreigners, and to promote cross-cultural exchanges.

"After living in China for years, I've observed that many of the conflicts or clashes between Chinese employees and their foreign bosses lie in the lack of knowledge of each other's cultures and way of doing things," Jowett said.

With an increasingly large number of multinational companies investing in China, and Westerners settling in the country, the issue of cross-cultural misunderstanding has become more prominent.

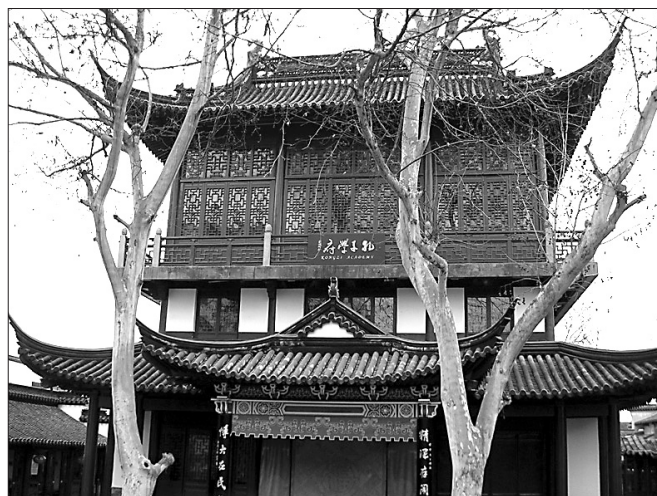
To tackle this problem, Jowett, with the help of local academics, planned and funded the Confucius Academy in Nanjing. The city is home to a large foreign population, and is called the country's "cultural capital."

Besides teaching Confucianism to locals and expats, the academy works with a number of universities and scholars to design and implement a variety of courses. These include bilingual education in the Chinese classics, cross-cultural training for international corporations, Chinese language and culture programs and introduction to Chinese studies for children.

Giving something back

Establishing the Confucius Academy was not an easy job for Jowett. "It took many years to make the idea a reality," he said, adding that when he first brought up the plan years ago, most people criticized it and thought he was crazy. "People didn't understand my idea and thought no students would come to the academy."

The formalities were another headache. "Nothing is easy in China. The government didn't really understand at first because of a bad translation of our plan. They thought we were a little ridiculous," he said.



Jowett's Confucius Academy in Nanjing



Communications between Jowett and the students in the academy

"They asked me, 'You're a foreigner. Why do you want to set up a Kongzi academy in China, which is something we should do?' I answered, 'I want to give something back to China.'"

But the raised eyebrows did not deter Jowett. "I thought it was my duty to open such an academy. Foreigners come to visit the city not just to see a building; they want to know the history behind the culture here. I also want to help Chinese people understand how foreigners think," he said.

"Many foreigners find it difficult to live in China. They need to overcome the cultural barriers. Chinese also find it difficult to communicate with foreigners, because they don't understand how foreigners think," he said. "And I stand in the middle. I have to be in the middle to see both sides."

Changing vantage points

In Jowett's opinion, many foreigners want to comprehend the Chinese psyche, but do not know how. They do not know where to find solutions to problems involving locals, he said, adding that expats often look at issues only from their point of view, so misunderstandings inevitably occur.

He cited two typical examples. He said most Westerners want to start a business in China as soon as possible, but procedures in the country are very complicated and move slowly. "Some Westerners might think the Chinese intend to create trouble for them and they get angry. The Chinese side then thinks, 'What am I doing wrong?'"

Another example is how Chinese people prefer to solve prob-

lems in a roundabout way, while Westerners want to hit the nail right on its head.

Jowett provided a story to explain further: A Western boss came to China to inspect a factory and discovered a problem. He asked a local supervisor what caused the problem, but the employee kept silent. After work, the supervisor wrote the boss an email saying he had earlier felt too embarrassed to name the person responsible for the problem because the person had been around. The boss could not understand what the big deal was, since it was a business matter and was nothing personal. From then on, the boss began doubting his staff's work attitude and ability.

Jowett's school intends to shed light on such problems by teaching students Confucian philosophy, which explains the Chinese way of thinking. The method also helps Westerners see issues from the Chinese people's point of view. Eventually, foreigners begin to understand why they feel uncomfortable or get angry with local practices.

Fascinated with Chinese culture

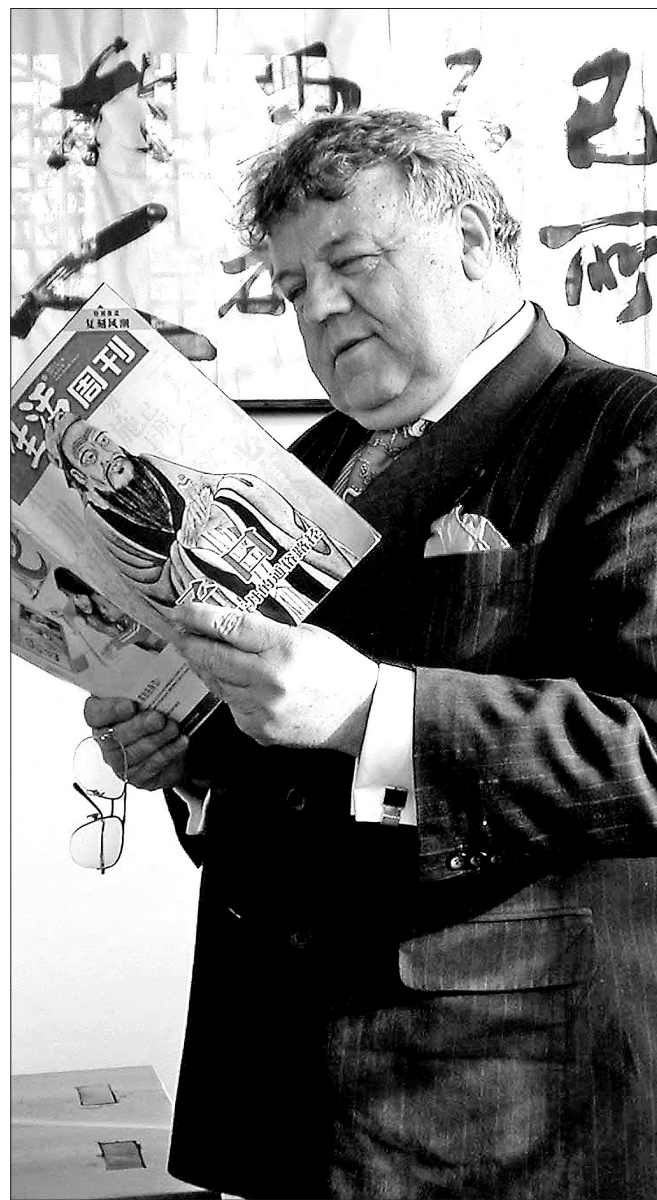
Jowett became fascinated with Chinese culture when he came to Beijing in 1994 and bought a book written by Confucius.

The book opened a window for him to understand the local culture; he realized Confucianism was an essential component of the country's culture and philosophy.

"Two thousand and five hundred years ago, Confucius taught that we should pay attention to our families, and to the way we communicate with each other. His theories are meaningful even today," Jowett said.

Through his readings, Jowett learned that Confucian thinking emphasizes the harmonious existence between people with different ideologies and concepts.

But Jowett also discovered that Chinese culture has been invaded by Western practices, which have had some negative impact on local youth.



Barry Jowett has lived in China for 15 years and acts as a bridge to connect East and West in cultural exchange. In 2007, he opened his own Confucius Academy in Nanjing to promote traditional Chinese culture to foreigners and cross-cultural exchanges.

"China has imported aspects of Western culture to the detriment of its own," he said. "Many young Chinese claim they have adopted the American lifestyle: they dress like Americans, love American movies, speak English with an American accent. They want to be American, but they cannot," Jowett said. "They don't really understand it. They just want to act that way, and are reluctant to communicate with Westerners when an opportunity presents itself."

Crossing cultures also a family issue

Even though Jowett teaches cross-cultural communication to both locals and foreigners, real-life situations are another story. His Chinese wife and he sometimes butt heads when it comes to their 11-year-old daughter's education.

Jowett's wife arranges a rigid

study schedule for the girl, on top of the tons of homework her school asks her to do. He, however, has a different take on the matter. "In the West, children should have ample time to play and be with the family," he said.

To resolve the conflict, he and his wife reached a compromise. "I'm in China, so I need to follow local practices. Competition here is intense, so if my daughter doesn't keep up, she might come up short in the future," he said.

On the academy's future, Jowett is very optimistic. "We are considering opening a cultural exchange center in Nanjing. We are even considering the possibility of establishing a Confucius Academy in other countries to fulfill our goal of letting more people know about Confucianism and the Chinese culture," he said.

Photos provided by Barry Jowett



David Tool, born in 1942 in Los Angeles, is a professor at Beijing International Studies University. He is also a consultant at the Beijing Speaks Foreign Languages Committee, consultant of the English translation of public signs and founder of the "Ask Me" proposal. He was the only foreigner in the "Beijing Top Ten Volunteers" in 2007, and received the "Great Wall Friendship Award" in 2006.

By Zhang Dongya

David Tool, 67, known to Beijingers as "Lao Du," is often seen in traditional Chinese clothing, examining street signs.

After three years of teaching at Gansu Province's Lanzhou University, Tool moved to Beijing International Studies University in 2001. The Los Angeles native has dedicated 13 years to teaching English in China. In his spare time, he works as a volunteer consultant to correct the misuse of English on public signs, something he has been doing since 2002.

Tool has tried to help preserve Chinese culture and to make it better understood by foreigners. He has witnessed the development of English usage in the country and has dedicated himself to its continued improvement. He plans to spend the rest of his life doing this in China, and helping elderly people like himself feel useful to society.

More open and free to foreign faces

When Tool went to Lanzhou in 1991, he was working on his master's degree in Chinese cultural geography with a focus on the Yellow River. He used to sit on the river's bank for hours, thinking of the body of water's significance in Chinese history.

Before he came to China, he expected to see many people on Lanzhou's outskirts living in loess caves as Chairman Mao had done in Yan'an. "Actually I was a little disappointed - everything looked more modern than I had expected," Tool said.

Unlike today, when street vendors can greet Tool "Good morning," people in Lanzhou in the early 1990s did not know what to say when they bumped into him. But they did try to be courteous in nonverbal ways, Tool said.

A memory that still amuses Tool is how people back in Lanzhou, who passed him on their bicycles, would shout "Please sit down." At first he could not figure out what they meant. He later realized people heard the sentence being spoken in restaurants, when servers seated diners, and must have assumed it was some kind of greeting. "For the three years I was there, I heard it often but took it as a marvelous indication of Chinese friendliness," Tool said.

Some young people, however, were afraid to look at him - a foreigner in the face. When he greeted them either by saying "Hello" or "Nihao," they would

China has turned to be more "international" with more people speaking English. During the past years, people are more open and free to foreign faces, and less mistakes can be seen in English signs in public, which is helpful for Chinese culture better understood by the outside world.

David Tool

A life-long English teacher



It makes Tool happy that the "Ask Me" program gives old folks like himself a chance to be useful.



Tool was the second Olympic torchbearer in Beijing during the relay.

Photos provided by David Tool

giggle and run away. Tool said he took these reactions as friendly gestures, and continued to initiate contact with youths.

Though this still happens in Beijing with school children or rural folks who are visiting, a majority of locals have gotten used to foreigners. "I have always found the 'man on the street' to be friendly, especially if you smile and greet him first. In my experience, 95 percent will smile, 75 percent will return the greeting and the 5 percent who do not smile or respond are just caught by surprise or are shy and don't know what to say," Tool said.

Advancements in speaking English

In Tool's early years in China, "English Corners," or gatherings of Chinese people and native Eng-

lish speakers, were a popular way for locals to improve their English. Many foreigners, however, disliked the concept, finding the atmosphere quite contrived.

Tool admitted to disliking it too, after joining several meetings in Lanzhou, because he usually got the same questions: Can you use chopsticks? Do you like Chinese food? What is the fastest way to learn English?

When Tool visited cities like Xi'an, Chengdu and Guilin in the early 1990's, young people boldly went up to him and asked if they could practice their English with him. But he was usually asked the same questions he got at "English Corner."

Even on Wangfujing Street he had a similar experience in 2001. But in 2004, he had people

coming up to him to ask if he liked Chinese art and if he wanted to see their teacher's work.

"This process showed that the general level of English was getting better or that those who spoke some English got a good job because of their ability and were using it," Tool said.

In the past seven years, he has been invited to judge numerous English competitions in Beijing. "I saw that the level of difficulty and the plays they were required to perform to show their abilities were much more demanding than in the past," he said.

He also discovered that ordinary people, like tour guides, clerks, restaurant servers and police officers were speaking better English compared to seven years ago.

Less mistakes in public signs

Tool's decision to correct Chinglish signs and the improper use of English came as a result of his love for Chinese opera. In 2001, during a performance of the Peking Opera *Monkey*, he saw the audience break into laughter numerous times because the English subtitles for the drama were just ridiculous.

"It was very embarrassing to both the Chinese and foreign people in the audience. A simple mistake like that can have a disproportionate influence on foreigners' concept of Chinese history and culture. We must do them (translations) correctly, so they can be understood by for-

eigners," he said.

Tool wrote to the Ministry of Culture that very night, offering his linguistic services on a voluntary basis. Not long after, he was invited by the Beijing municipal government to correct English translations on subway signs, thus his career in correcting Chinglish started.

Each weekend, he walks, cycles or drives through Beijing's streets, hutong, scenic spots, museums, stadiums and gymnasiums. Whenever he spots a mistake on an English sign, notice, menu, he tells the relevant people and offers advice on how to correct it.

Tool is happy when foreigners who have lived in Beijing for years tell him they see fewer signs written in Chinglish.

Through Tool's effort, the Beijing Speaks Foreign Languages Committee, of which he is a consultant, has published manuals guiding public and private entities how to create proper signs in English. These manuals are now being used in other Chinese cities as well.

For the Olympic Games, Tool founded the "Ask Me" program and the City Volunteers program, which provided assistance to foreign visitors. The initiatives continue up to this day.

Tool said his volunteer work makes him happy. Many of his fellow volunteers are the same age as him and love the chance to be "useful."

By He Jianwei

Chinese contemporary art has caught the eye of international collectors in the past decade. Uli Sigg, a Swiss collector, has brought many contemporary Chinese artists into the world stage, including those who focus on contemporary art history such as Ai Weiwei, Zhang Xiaogang, Fang Lijun and Yue Minjun.



Uli Sigg Ambassador for Chinese contemporary art

“It was exciting to look at contemporary Chinese art works. I thought it was another way to study China.”

CFP Photo



Uli Sigg, born 1946, grew up in Switzerland. He completed a PhD in law at the University of Zurich. From 1977 to 1990, he worked for the Schindler Group where he became area manager for Asia Pacific, and later a member of the group executive committee and shareholders' board.

In 1980, he established the first joint venture between China and the West and remained its vice chairman for 10 years. He then served on the board of a number of global companies until 1995 when the

Swiss federal government appointed him to be ambassador to China, North Korea and Mongolia, for four years.

He spent many years in China following the opening up of the country and of its contemporary art scene. Sigg, a former collector of Western contemporary art, possesses the world's most substantial collection of contemporary Chinese art. In 1997, he established the Chinese Contemporary Art Award, a prize for contemporary artists living in the country.

Even at 62, he has the eyes of an eagle. He is credited with “discovering” many contemporary local artists in the past decades. He is perhaps the most influential collector of Chinese contemporary art and owns about 2,000 pieces as varied as canvases, videos, photographs and installations.

He began collecting in 1985 and is said to be the only collector to have witnessed the development of contemporary Chinese art from its infancy.

Fascinated with Chinese contemporary art

Sigg's ties with China formed in 1979. That year, as an employee at Switzerland-based Schindler Group, he established a joint venture with China – the first such deal between Chinese and a Western company. The Chinese government contacted Schindler Group and expressed a desire to work together to develop the country's elevator industry.

“Before I visited Beijing in 1979, as a representative for the Schindler company, I didn't think that this country, a thousand kilometers away from me, had any links with my life,” he said.

Sigg's interest in art developed at an early age. “When I was younger, I preferred classic European works,” he said. “But as I matured, I became more fascinated with the energy and power of contemporary artwork.”

Sigg first learned of China's contemporary art in the late-1970s through photographs that friends gave him.

When he came to China in the 1980s, he had an opportunity to see first-hand the works of contemporary artists: He visited the studios of more than 1,000 young artists, from the north to the south, from big cities to mid-sized cities. “I think I've met more artists than Chinese curators have in the past years,” he said.

His influence in the contemporary art community is illustrated in a fictional anecdote that artists like to tell about him: Once, on a visit to a painter's home, Sigg was bitten by the artist's dog. That unpleasant experience has kept the painter an obscure artist.

Vast art collection

In his 20s, Sigg began to collect art. He was captivated by romanticist and realist pieces. “At the beginning, I collected many paintings from Swiss abstract artists,” he said.

The first Chinese art piece he bought was an oil painting. “It was exciting to look at contemporary Chinese art works. I thought it was another way to study China,” he said.

Sigg believes there are two kinds of contemporary Chinese art. The first has an international scope, discussing issues that all people care about, such as love and death. “At the beginning, contemporary Chinese art was strongly influenced by the West,” he said. “But gradually, it grew into something much more vernacular.”

This is the second type of art Sigg refers to – those influenced by Chinese policies. He cited Zhang Xiaogang's “Bloodline” painting series as an example. In each painting, there are three persons in a family. “If you don't know China's one-child (family planning) policy, you won't understand why he always puts three persons in a painting,” he said.

Sigg's collection includes pieces by 160 top artists, which are rare in local museums or galleries. “Contemporary art deals with current issues in China – issues such as urbanization, destruction and the one-child policy – from an individual's point of view,” he said.

His basis for choosing art pieces are collectors' books and magazines. “I know what is worthwhile and what is not,” he said.

Setting up an award

When he realized contemporary Chinese



Liu Wei's installation won 2008's Chinese Contemporary Art Award.

Photos provided by CCAA

artists were little known overseas, he set up the Chinese Contemporary Art Award (CCAA) in 1997. Its aim was to encourage the work of artists who show originality and promise; and to promote their works through exhibitions and publications.

CCAA has become an institution in the local art scene, with awardees becoming well-recognized on the world art stage.

Sigg also has a personal motivation for establishing the CCAA: “I want to document history through the works I have collected.”

Future depends on artists' creativity

Sigg said that Chinese artists who emerged 20 years ago injected power and enthusiasm into their works, which largely reflected social issues. Younger artists, on the other hand, care more about the inner world, the hidden realm of the mind.

In the past, 20 years spanned a genera-

tion; now, 10 or even 5 years can make a generation, he said. “It's hard to recognize the new generation's works, because they don't have a clear take on culture,” he said. “It's dangerous that many artists, some of whom have produced excellent works in the past, have begun to be redundant or imitate other artists.”

Sigg still visits the studio of young artists to discover new talents, but admitted it has become more difficult to uncover interesting artists. An increasing number of artists lack the ability to think independently, and fewer art works are endowed with their creator's personality, he said.

Sigg is not sure whether he should be optimistic about the local art scene. “The future depends on artists creating better work,” he said. But he added that China's development is providing young artists with unparalleled opportunities, so they should use these to create better art.

By Wang Yu

Since the country opened its door in the 1980's, the native music scene has experienced its rise and fall. Here is a story about two foreign rock music promoters' exploration in China, which reflects hardships and also new opportunities.

Michael Pettis & Charles Saliba

Digging out Beijing's new sound



Photo by Cim

Michael Pettis

A professor at Peking University's Guanghua School of Management who also taught, from 2002 to 2004, at Tsinghua University's School of Economics and Management and, from 1992 to 2001, at Columbia University's Graduate School of Business. Pettis is a well-known music enthusiast. He used to have a rock club in New York and founded D-22 and the record label Maybe Mars.

Charles Saliba

The manager of D-22 who is the co-partner of Michael Pettis. Saliba used to live and study in Spain and England, and worked in New York as a consultant. He is now studying for his master's degree at Tsinghua University.



Photo provided by Charles Saliba

It is crowded every weekend at midnight in D-22, one of the capital's most popular rock clubs. Though some Western media describe the small and rough place as Beijing's CBGB, most in the local music scene would say it has a long way to go.

Pre-millennium Chinese rock

Beijing is China's birthplace of rock. As the capital of the country, its music scene has been open to a range of foreign influences. There were some live performances in small bars and hotels in the 1980s, but music was almost exclusively the domain of university students and the underground bohemian circles.

Cui Jian, often referred to as the "godfather of Chinese rock," played one of his classic pieces "Nothing to My Name" at a concert in 1986. The performance is now mentioned as the beginning of Chinese rock. Early bands such as Tang Dynasty and Black Panther then emerged with other pioneers and took the young audience by storm.

After 1990, the new music became an essential part of urban youth culture. It reached its first peak in creativity and popularity between 1990 and 1993. More bands were established during this period of time and because they were excluded from the mainstream media, their performances remained confined to informal, underground parties.

The nostalgia which was brought by Cui Jian's early works was replaced by the negation of traditional Chinese culture. In 1994, it began to decline due to stricter censorship and shaky cultural roots. Pop music from Hong Kong and

Taiwan came to dominate the mainland.

First impression of local music scene

In the West, rock has long been the domain of the working classes. In China, it was introduced by intellectuals and became a hip lifestyle for small groups.

"My first show ever in Beijing was when I went to see Hang on the Box. It was impressive. I have to admit that before I came to China, I didn't have a very good impression of China's rock music. All I knew was sweet pop stars," Charles Saliba said.

But Saliba came not for Beijing's music. Due to his mixed cultural background and the experience of living in different countries, the chance to explore the country was what drew him here.

Michael Pettis moved to Beijing in 2002 after a week-long vacation in the city because he was becoming restless at an increasingly predictable job. He said the music scene was extremely provincial when he arrived.

"The audience was small and not very adventurous and preferred the familiar to the new," Pettis said.

"When I first came, there were only two or three good bands in Beijing. And the music circle here was very small. Most of the bands were not very good – just copies of famous American or English bands. I remember there were two bands that acted and sounded like Radiohead. You could tell which foreign musicians were popular by watching the rock shows here," Saliba said.

Besides Hang on the Box, such bands as Joyside and PK 14 caught Pettis and Saliba's attention. "They

are original and talented. Beijing has most of the conditions to become a major musical center. The only thing it lacked was a good audience and artists willing and able to take risks," Saliba said.

Bitter sweet symphony

D-22 opened on May 1, 2006, in the college district of Haidian. It can be seen as a reemergence of SIN – Pettis' old club in New York – as a hothouse for young musicians. In most of the local rock fans' minds, the club was founded to give a venue to the owner's favorite bands like Car Sick Cars.

"We prepared for D-22 in late 2005. At first, we were worrying about getting enough good bands and musicians to fill our weekends. But it seemed that everybody wanted to get involved in the new scene – especially the college bands in the Wudaokou area," Saliba said.

The record label Maybe Mars was formed to help the bands to make their albums and export the music. But money is always difficult to come by.

"We are still losing money running both D-22 and Maybe Mars. As a business of a subculture, we also do promotions but don't want to get into the mainstream. We're lucky that we have investors," Saliba said.

"There's an American tradition that rich people are willing to support artists. We told them one day, one of our bands will become the next Radiohead and these guys invest because they care about the alternative music scene here. One of them, a banker, once told me that he likes listening to Car Sick Cars when running," he added.

Another problem to be solved is the lack of audience. Pettis once



D-22 is crowded every weekend

Photo by Yang Yidong

said that they lacked confidence in their own musicians that anyone who did something different was either ignored or criticized, and lousy no-name foreign bands who were touring China regularly drew much bigger audiences than good local bands.

But since the decline in 1994, many young people have had no idea what rock music is, even in the college district. "We are not here to help the musicians but also to help the audience. In China, the mainstream is everything. That's why we put our club here, near the colleges, to educate more young people," Saliba said.

Achievement and change

Now D-22 has more than 13 house bands and the number keeps growing. Not only in Beijing, but young musicians from other cities, such as 24 Hours and DiKuAi also signed with Maybe Mars last year.

Pettis has the connections to bring over to China under-appreciated players like Matthew Shipp, Alvin Curran, Elliott Sharp and Ex Models. Well-known producers like Martin Atkins and Wharton Tiers have also been introduced to Beijing to help record the albums

of local bands.

"We hope it can further the dialogue between the two cultures and let the musicians know what is happening on the other side of the planet," Saliba said. "There used to be few good bands in the city but now the number maybe 15 or even more: that's a big improvement."

But the barricade which stands on the way of China's rock music is the lack of a system to support talented people. "That's what we are trying to work on. In New York, the music industry is so well developed, like a machine that runs itself. Even young bands have opportunities. Less than a year after we opened D-22, we started MAO ... Things are getting better," Saliba said.

Beijing's energy and its pool of talent may bring more and more musicians here to take advantage of the low prices and burgeoning scene. "I'm thinking soon there will be more new record labels, and as a friend of these musicians, there is nothing better than doing what you love. I hope they can make a living on music," Saliba said.

By Jin Zhu

Since China opened to the world, its film industry has improved by leaps and bounds. Each year, more and more well-made films make it to the big screen. Many cities are building top-notch movie theaters and in Beijing, a trip to the cinema is becoming a new habit.

Matthew Brosenne, an experienced media researcher from the US, has been here throughout the shift. He puts his data analysis skills to work in unraveling the trends in Chinese film.

Matthew Brosenne

Breaking down the film boom

He observes every detail about the development of the film industry.

While he was living in Taiwan in 1994, his teacher gave him a special Chinese name: Bai Muxuan. "My teacher felt I was a mysterious person since I always looked like I was pondering something and kept silent in class. So he gave me the name 'xuan,' which means mystery. Actually, I couldn't understand him and was just confused about the lessons," Brosenne said with a smile.

Eighteen years later, he works for one of the most important media research companies in China.

Chance date with Chinese film

Having grown up in the US, Brosenne knew nothing about Chinese film until he saw *Ju Dou*, directed by Zhang Yimou in 1990 in Hong Kong. The experience convinced him Chinese film was worth investigating.

"I still remember how I felt when I saw a Chinese film for the first time. I was totally attracted by its charm," he said.

He was addicted from then on. While living in Hong Kong he scoured the market for interesting flicks. "At that time, movies, TV and theaters were popular in Hong Kong. I always rented video cassettes and went to the cinema. Martial arts movies were my favorites," he said.

Compared to 30 years ago, Chinese film companies have made outstanding progress, he said.

Adding up figures for success

But despite his HK rentals, Brosenne is convinced movies belong on the big screen.

"(They're) not like TV dramas. Many people buy VCDs or DVDs to watch at

"Box-receipts for Chinese films should increase 20 percent over the next three years, which would be more than double the rate of GDP growth."

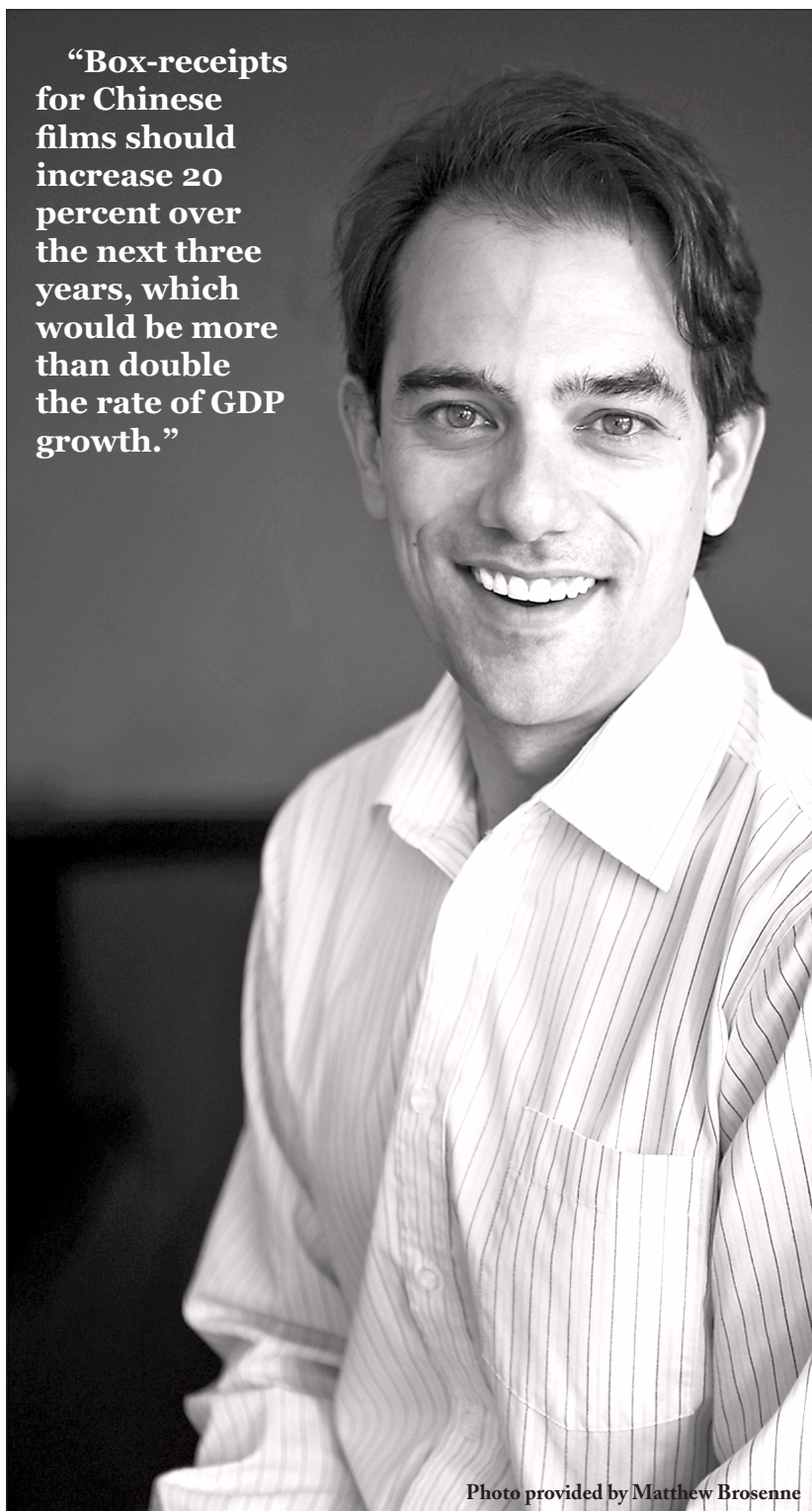
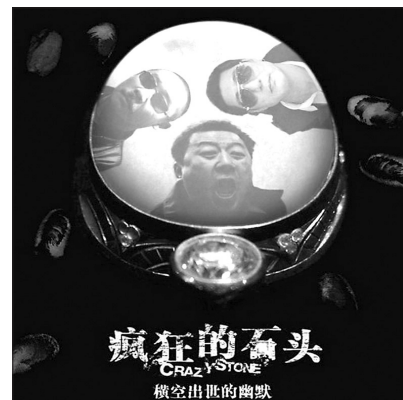


Photo provided by Matthew Brosenne

Matthew Brosenne spent 12 years gaining insight into Chinese cinema and the mindsets of domestic filmmakers. But his journey to China first began in his hometown of Philadelphia, US.

He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in East Asian Studies and International Relations, and then moved on to Taiwan where he worked for the Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS) Group, a market research firm, in 1994. In 1997, he found a job as director of business development at CSM Media Research in Beijing, a position which has brought him ever closer to Chinese film over the last 10 years.



home. However, I don't think those are a good way to enjoy film," he said.

The country began a complex cinema administration system in 2004. The movie theaters, especially in big cities, are required to use superior equipment and offer similar standard services.

Like many in Beijing, he frequently goes to see movies at the theater.

"It would be incredible to imagine the current prosperity only five or six years ago, when most cinemas were dilapidated and attracted few viewers. Today, it is totally different. People line up for tickets, especially when a well-made film is showing," he said.

As director of business at the CSM, he published about the many problems which continue to plague the industry.

"Many moviemakers in China go with their gut feeling rather than making a decision based on hard data. It's not that their gut is wrong: it's simply not as accurate," he said.

According to his research about Chinese audiences, Brosenne said the reality of their habits is terribly different from what filmmakers expect.

"Most moviemakers in China firmly believe there are a limited number of film types which appeal to the public: examples would be ancient costume dramas and martial arts movies. However, audiences want more: science fiction is a huge market for younger viewers," he said.

Besides the great successes seen by a handful of directors like Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige and Feng Xiaoning, many young directors are growing up and show ingoff their abilities.

"Young directors in China are not simply imitating when they make movies. Their movies have a totally different style," he said, citing Ning Hao's *Crazy Stone* as an example. "(The film was made) on a shoestring budget, but it was a box-office success that brought in more than 10 million yuan," he said.

Box office says bright future

"Box-receipts for Chinese films should increase 20 percent over the next three years, which would be more than double the rate of GDP growth," Brosenne said.

He said competition is sure to be more fierce as the market matures.

One of the next problems to tackle, he says, is the release schedules for films.

"In the current market, many well-made films are all arranged to debut at the same time. However, audiences don't have the time to view them all. It's kind of a waste," he said.

"China needs a strong and powerful guild system to lead and coordinate every sector in the film industry," he said. "In many developed countries, such as the US and Britain, their film markets are developing steadily with the help of an advanced guild system. China should not be an exception."



By Zhao Hongyi

The Chinese people believe the country's economic reforms and opening began in 1978 when Deng Xiaoping blew the horn at a party meeting in November that year. In 1992, Deng again pushed reform into their second phase. Though China has experienced ups and downs in the past three decades, its citizens are living in a more prosperous and peaceful country.

Many foreigners have witnessed great changes in China and *Beijing Today* presents some of the most eye-catching events of the 30 years.

30 years of changes



Foreign teachers (外教): Education is the first sector where foreign exchanges began once China opened its doors. In 1978, the first group of foreign teachers took to the podiums in Chinese universities. Today, foreign teachers work in elementary schools, kindergartens and the less-developed Western provinces. Foreign professionals play roles in almost every sector, like sports, entertainment, business, culture, industry and even government.

JVs (合资企业): In 1980, the first joint venture in China, Beijing Air Catering, was approved. The first group included Schindler China Elevator, Xinjiang Tianshan Wool Textile Stock, the Beijing Jianguo Hotel, Beijing Great Wall Hotel and Tianjin Dynasty Winery.



Wham Band (威猛乐队): In April 1985, the band Wham performed a rock concert in Beijing. It was the country's first visit by a pop act. "Careless Whisper" and "Last Christmas" are still popular in China, and are enjoyed both by middle-aged people and young students.



Pierre Cardin & Maxim's (皮尔卡丹和马克西姆餐厅): In 1979, Pierre Cardin brought his models to China for the first fashion show in the People's Republic since 1949. In 1983, he opened Maxim's. Years later, he opened Minim's. In 1991, Elle published its Chinese edition and became the first fashion magazine to enter China.



KFC, McDonald (肯德基和麦当劳): In 1987, KFC opened its first outlet in front of the Forbidden City. Today, the chain has 440 chain stores in 111 cities. McDonald's opened its trial store in Shenzhen in 1990 and its first full outlet on Wangfujing Street in 1992. The company has increased its outlets to 680 and brought Pizza Hut and Taco Bell to China as well.



Xiushuijie & Yabaolu (秀水街和雅宝路): In early 1990s, Xiushui Street near the US Embassy prospered. Vendors sold cheap garments and silk product attracting nearby embassy workers. Today, the open-air free market has turned into a shopping mall.

Yabaolu was once the first choice for "Dao Ye," private wholesalers and retailers from Russia and Eastern Europe, to collect cheap but fashionable garments, shoes and clothes. Today the street is the providence of money changers.



Sanlitun Bar Street (三里屯酒吧街): The first bar opened on Sanlitun in 1989. After 10 years of expansion, a bar street formed in the city's downtown marks a destination for tourists and expats. At the turn of the century, the municipal government began renovations on the Houhai area, which stimulated the development of bars and night clubs in the area.



Panjiayuan & Gaobeidian (潘家园和高碑店): In the 1980s, antiques were still a small business in Beijing. But the market saw a tremendous expansion in the 1990s. Other markets include the Gaobeidian Antique Furniture Street, Liulichang Handwritings and Paintings, Fengzhongsi Coins and souvenirs, and the Northern Furniture Market.

Permanent residence permit (永久居住证): In 2004, the Chinese government issued the first group of permanent residential status cards, also called "Chinese Green Cards," to foreigners. Some 100,000 foreigners have since obtained permission to reside in the country. Aside from top professionals, most expats continue to struggle to make a life for themselves in the cities. Besides restaurants, many expats also run schools, work in the embassies or find other ways to put down roots in the cities.



Community management (居委会管理): In 2006, some residential communities in Beijing, like Maizidian and Wangjing, invited expats to participate in the community's management and participate in grassroots elections. The new style of management has been introduced to hundreds of communities throughout the country. Overseas volunteers penetrate every corner of the poor and under-developed west as teachers, experts, technicians and social workers.



Foreign media (外媒): In January 2007, China opened its second and third-line cities, including Tibet, to foreign media as part of preparations to meet the coming Olympic Games. The government also required government bodies to keep spokespersons to answer daily inquiries. In October 2008, China cancelled its system which required foreign media to apply for permission and accompaniment to cover events.



Still, Moving



This name of Paris-Beijing Photo Gallery's latest exhibition is a perfect description for the modern capital. Belgian photographer Pierre Siedel focuses on the Beijing subway and its passenger as they stare into the long corridors: strange and familiar at the same time.

In these tunnels, new arterial paths in the modern city, the transitional and fleeting journey is made with a quick and automatic pace.

Between cinema and photography, Pierre's large-format camera freezes time. He captures the stray individual in the faceless crowd and brings him to life. Detached from the masses, his story is one of waiting, expectations, boredom and oblivion.

(By Venus Lee)



Where:

Paris-Beijing Photo Gallery, 798 Art District, Dashanzi, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When:

Until March 19

Tel:

5987 9262, 5987 9263

Web site:

www.parisbeijingphotogallery.com

Photos provided by Paris-Beijing Photo Gallery